3 FAH-1 H-2820
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM FOR GENERAL SCHEDULE, SENIOR LEVEL, AND PREVAILING RATE EMPLOYEES

(CT:POH-153; 06-22-2012)
(Office of Origin: HR/PE)

3 FAH-1 H-2821 RESPONSIBILITIES

3 FAH-1 H-2821.1 Bureau Executive Offices

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. Bureau executive directors have the responsibility of overseeing the administration of the appraisal process within the bureau to ensure that the regulations published in 3 FAM 2820, this subchapter, and all applicable laws, rules and regulations governing Performance Appraisal for General Schedule, Senior Level and Prevailing Rate Employees are followed.

b. Bureaus will complete and forward ratings to the Bureau Executive office in accordance with established bureau procedures for processing.

c. All bureaus should:

(1) Conduct orientation sessions for new managers, supervisors, and employees;

(2) Provide training sessions for bureau personnel as needed (e.g., at the end of the rating cycle to inform personnel of requirements and deadlines);

(3) Provide advice and counseling to bureau personnel upon request;

(4) Monitor the process to ensure that performance plans, progress reviews and ratings are completed for all personnel;

(5) Evaluate the processes throughout the year by meeting with managers, rating officials and employees;

(6) Encourage employees to take a part in the performance appraisal process;

(7) Reward good performance through the Department Awards Program (3 FAM 4800) and consider eligible employees for Quality Step Increases (3 FAM 3124.4); and,

(8) Address unacceptable performance.

d. Bureaus with delegated authority for performance management have additional responsibility for:

(1) Entering overall summary rating levels into the Department's electronic personnel database for employees in grades 1 through 13;

(2) Releasing annual ratings of record for inclusion in the Employee Performance File (EPF); and

(3) Submitting completed ratings for: employees in grades 14 and 15; Senior Level employees; Schedule C employees; and any other employees not covered under the Bureau's delegation of authority to HR/CSP.

3 FAH-1 H-2821.2 Office of Civil Service Personnel Management (HR/CSP)

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. The Office of Civil Service Personnel Management (HR/CSP):

(1) Provides technical guidance to bureau executive offices in the management of the Department-wide Appraisal Program evaluation cycle to ensure proper preparation and timely submission of performance appraisals for covered employees;

(2) Provides advisory service and technical guidance to bureaus in the design and development of individual bureau appraisal programs;

(3) Processes ratings for bureaus who do not have delegated authority for performance management;

(4) Assists bureaus in providing training to managers, supervisors and employees, as appropriate;

(5) Administers the Delinquent Rater Program as well as the Recognition Program that commends rating officials of covered employees for preparation of candid, well written performance appraisal reports; and

(6) Counsels employees, supervisors and managers on the Department-wide Performance Appraisal Program.

3 FAH-1 H-2821.3 Rating Officials

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. The rating official will:

(1) Develop performance plans in consultation with the reviewing official and employee for each employee generally within 30 days of the first day of the rating cycle or when the employee is being initially assigned to the job. Additionally, the plan should be reestablished within 30 days of the arrival of a new supervisor. Communicate performance expectations, goals and objectives, individual and organizational, to each employee, at least at the fully successful level;

(2) Develop and communicate performance plans for employees on details and in long-term training;

(3) Provide employee training and development opportunities. (Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are recommended for each employee and can be set up at the beginning of the appraisal period.);

(4) Periodically discuss the employee's performance. Provide feedback to the employee on performance throughout the appraisal period. Discussion may include strengths and weaknesses and suggest ways to improve performance and increase opportunities for career advancement. One formal progress review is required annually. Use the Optional Progress Review (Form DS-1967) to facilitate progress reviews. This Optional Progress Review Form is not placed in the Employee Performance File (EPF);

(5) Inform Reviewing Official on performance and progress of employees under his or her responsibility throughout the appraisal period;

(6) Prepare an interim performance appraisal for any employee who works under a written performance plan for the minimum period of 120 days or longer. (At the end of the appraisal period, the rating official of record must consider any other interim ratings received by an employee during the rating cycle, when preparing the final appraisal report.);

(7) Prepare an annual performance appraisal for each employee, using Form DS-1966, Instructions for Preparation, Form DS-1966I and Appendix Generic Performance Standards, Form DS-1966A; consider interim appraisal reports, if applicable;

(8) Recognize employees under the Department Award’s Program throughout the year (Refer to 3 FAM 4800). Consider employees for Quality Step Increases (QSIs), as appropriate. (Refer to Form DS-1968, QSI Recommendation, Form DS-1968I, QSI Guidelines, and 3 FAM 3124.4 for additional information.);

(9) Request input (statement of accomplishments) from the employee on the annual appraisal report for consideration and inclusion in the annual appraisal report; and

(10) Contact HR/ER when an employee's performance is less than fully successful, or when performance or conduct indicates the need for special counseling, medical treatment, or disciplinary action.

b. Employees on probation are covered under the 3 FAM 2824 regulations.

3 FAH-1 H-2821.4 Reviewing Officials

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. Reviewing officials should:

(1) Ensure that procedures are established and followed throughout the appraisal process, including all employees in the organization are treated fairly; written performance plans are established within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period or when a new employee joins the organization; performance is monitored throughout the appraisal period and at least one formal progress review is conducted; poor performance is addressed when it becomes apparent; the preparation of appraisal reports; development and training opportunities are considered; and appropriate recognition is provided;

(2) Concur in and sign performance plans;

(3) Communicate organizational goals and objectives to rating officials for inclusion in employee performance plans;

(4) Ensure consistency in performance plans and appraisals across the organization for the same job series and grade levels;

(5) Discuss the rated employee's performance with the employee during the rating period at the request of the employee or the rating official, or on own initiative;

(6) Provide a higher level review of the employee’s performance appraisal; at the request of the employee; upon receipt of an unacceptable rating; or, when the interim performance rating will become the rating of record and the current supervisor disagrees with the interim rating. (Refer to 3 FAM 2825.6-4 and Form DS-1966, Section V, Part 3); and

(7) Review evaluation reports for thoroughness, objectivity, soundness, and compliance with evaluation instructions.

3 FAH-1 H-2821.5 Employees

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. Employees should:

(1) Familiarize themselves with the 3 FAM 2820 and FAH 2820 regulations and procedures;

(2) Discuss the performance plan, progress review or appraisal with the rating official or the reviewing official at any time during the rating cycle;

(3) Participate with the rating and reviewing officials in formulating performance plans;

(4) Communicate changes in performance to rating and reviewing officials if one or more job elements change during the rating cycle;

(5) Meet periodically with the rating official to discuss performance;

(6) Inform the rating official of any circumstances which should be considered in evaluating his/her performance;

(7) Provide accomplishments to the rating official for consideration in preparing the rating;

(8) Review and comment on the draft appraisal report;

(9) Review completed appraisal report and provide employee comments, if desired (on DS-1966, Section IV, Part 3, Employee Comments);

(10) If desired, request a higher level review by the reviewing official by completing Form DS-1966, Section V, Part 2, Employee's Request for a Higher Level Review by the Reviewing Official (If a higher level review is requested, the reviewing official does have the authority to change the rating.);

(11) If desired, comment on higher level review if applicable, using Section IV, Part 3, Employee Comments or the Continuation Sheet on Form DS-1966;

(12) Sign and date Form DS-1966, Section V, Part 4, Appraisal Discussion, certifying that the appraisal discussion took place. (A signature acknowledges receipt of the report and does not indicate concurrence or disagreement with the appraisal.);

(13) Understand that rating officials and reviewing officials may see comments made by the employee on his or her appraisal report; and

(14) Submit to HR/EX/ADM letters of commendation or similar materials for inclusion in the Employee Performance Folder (EPF).

3 FAH-1 H-2822 PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING A SEPARATE APPRAISAL PROGRAM

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. Bureaus must request authority to implement a separate appraisal program.

b. Should a Bureau decide to request authority to implement a separate appraisal program, that appraisal program must be developed within the requirements

set forth in the Department's Performance Appraisal System, approved by OPM on September 26, 1996, and documented in 3 FAM 2820. When developing a separate appraisal program, a bureau should work in partnership with all stakeholders including union representatives, bureau employees, supervisors and managers.

c. HR/CSP/ERPM must be consulted early in the discussion and planning phases and throughout the design phase of the appraisal program.

d. HR/CSP/ERPM will review the proposed program for conformance with applicable laws, regulations and procedures, obtain appropriate clearances, and forward the request to M/DGHR.

e. Once the bureau program has been approved by the Director General, the Bureau and/or Office will be notified in writing.

f. Employees and supervisors must receive training on the new program prior to it being implemented.

g. Programs are established on a pilot basis only, not to exceed two years. Extensions may be requested and will be considered by the Director General.

h. HR/CSP will conduct an evaluation of the pilot program and will make recommendations to the Director General on whether the appraisal program should continue permanently.

i. A bureau must comply with the Performance Appraisal System approved by OPM. If at any time a program is not in compliance, the bureau will be notified and given 45 days from date of notification in which to comply. If the bureau does not comply, employees will resume coverage under the Department-wide Program.

3 FAH-1 H-2823 DEPARTMENT-WIDE PROGRAM

3 FAH-1 H-2823.1 Timelines

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. The annual appraisal period for employees under the Department-wide program is January 1 to December 31.

b. The Performance Plan is completed on Form DS-1966 within 30 days of the first day of the rating cycle.

c. One Progress Review is required during the rating cycle. Document progress reviews on Form DS-1966, Section V, Part 1 as they occur. Form DS-1967 Optional Progress Review, may be used to facilitate discussion. Form DS-1967 does not however become a part of the official Employee Performance Folder.

d. Appraisal reports are due in HR/CSP by February 15.

e. Delinquent Rater lists and lists for rating officials who have prepared well-written ratings are due in HR/CSP by March 15.

3 FAH-1 H-2823.2 Job Elements

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

Critical, non-critical and additional job elements are addressed in 3 FAM 2823.4-3 through 4-5. Mandatory elements are addressed in 3 FAM 2823.4-6 and 4-7

3 FAH-1 H-2823.3 Performance Standards

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. The Department's Generic Performance Standards are the primary means of assigning appraisal levels. The Generic Performance Standards (Form DS-1966) are contained in an appendix to the Department-wide appraisal (Form DS-1966a).

b. Bureaus may develop specific performance standards to measure the performance of individuals, specific occupational groups, and/or team performance in lieu of the Generic Performance Standards. When specific standards are developed in lieu of the Generic Performance Standards, they must:

   (1) Be developed at least at the Fully Successful level for critical and non-critical elements.

   (2) Be consistent across the same series and the same grade levels within an organization.

   (3) Be cleared by HR/CSP/ERPM prior to including them in an employee's performance plan.

3 FAH-1 H-2823.4 Certification of Performance Plan

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. If the employee does not agree with the performance plan and refuses to sign it, the rating official marks Section II, Part 1, Item B on the Form DS-1966, dates it, and provides the employee with a copy. The absence of the employee's signature does not mean that the employee is not responsible for

performing the job elements as set up by the rating official.

b. Even if the performance plan has not changed since the previous rating period, it must be recertified by the rating official, reviewing official and the employee.

c. Performance plans are retained in the Bureau in accordance with procedures set up by the Executive Office.

3 FAH-1 H-2824 APPRAISING PERFORMANCE

3 FAH-1 H-2824.1 Input Into Appraisal

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

Rating officials must consider comments provided by employees but ultimately have the responsibility to decide what to include in the appraisal report.

3 FAH-1 H-2824.3 Higher Level Review

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. Reviewing officials are generally at least one organizational level above the rating official of the employee rated.

b. All ratings should have a higher level reviewing official. An exception may occur in very rare instances, where the employee works for the highest level official in the organization or where there is no higher level reviewing official who is familiar with the employee's performance.

3 FAH-1 H-2825 OFFICIAL RECORDS

3 FAH-1 H-2825.1 Technical Review

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

Procedures must be established by each bureau for conducting a technical review of all interim and ratings of record prior to forwarding the ratings for inclusion in the Employee Performance Folder (EPF). All ratings must be reviewed to assure that appraisal reports are complete, correct, all signatures have been obtained, the element and summary ratings are justified by appropriate examples, and that

no inadmissible comments (see 3 FAH-1 H-2825.2) are included in the rating. (See 3 FAH-1 H-2825.1 Exhibit H-2825.1 for the Technical Review Checklist)

3 FAH-1 H-2825.2 Inadmissible Comments

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

Inadmissible comments include, but are not limited to:

(1) Reference to race, color, religion, gender (except for titles of address, first names or personal pronouns), national origin, age, political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, or reference to spouse or family;

(2) Mention of the specific nature of a disability or medical condition;

(3) Mention of initiation of, involvement in, or participation in grievance or EEO proceedings;

(4) Comments on an employee's participation or non-participation in employee organization or activities;

(5) Reference to previous performance ratings or events or performance outside the rating period;

(6) Absences, except as it relates to performance;

(7) Reluctance to work overtime; or

(8) Conduct-related issue and/or disciplinary action.

3 FAH-1 H-2825.3 Submission and Disposition of Ratings of Record

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. Executive directors shall obtain evaluations from rating and reviewing officers and rated employees, ensure timely compliance with the performance evaluation schedule, and perform the technical review described in 3 FAH H-2825.1.

b. A copy of the completed report is retained by the executive office and a copy is given to the rated employee by the supervisor at the time of the appraisal discussion.

c. For bureaus without delegated personnel authority, the original rating of record is forwarded to HR/CSP/ERPM, where it is entered into the Department's electronic personnel database and forwarded for inclusion in the Employee Performance Folder (EPF).

d. For bureaus with delegated personnel authority:

(1) The bureau executive office enters the rating of record into the Department's electronic personnel database for grades 1 through 13 only, and forwards the rating to HR/EX for inclusion in the Employee performance Folder; and

(2) For grades 14 and 15, the original rating of record is forwarded to HR/CSP/ERPM where it is entered in the Department's electronic personnel database and forwarded for inclusion in the Employee Performance Folder.

3 FAH-1 H-2825.4 Delinquent Appraisal Reports

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

Each executive office will provide HR/CSP with a list of delinquent raters (include the name of the delinquent rater and the names of the employees whose reports were late or not prepared) no later than March 31 (90 days after the end of the rating cycle).

3 FAH-1 H-2826 INCENTIVES AND RECOGNITION

3 FAH-1 H-2826.1 Recognition Program

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

The executive office should utilize the technical review process to review ratings for the purpose of commending rating officials for preparation of timely and well written appraisals (See 3 FAH-1 H-2826.1 Exhibit H-2826.1 for criteria). Names of rating officials commended by the Bureau must be submitted to HR/CSP no later than March 31 (90 days after the end of the rating cycle).

3 FAH-1 H-2826.2 Performance Recognition

3 FAH-1 H-2826.2-1 Quality Step Increase (QSI)

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)
(State Only)
(Applies to Civil Service Employees Only)

a. Regulations governing Quality Step Increases are found in 5 CFR 531, Subpart

E and 3 FAM 3124.4.

(1) The Department-wide QSI program is administered by HR/CSP;

(2) Nominations for QSIs must be based on the highest summary rating level in a performance appraisal program. The Department's highest summary rating level is Outstanding;

(3) For bureaus with delegated personnel authority, QSI nominations for grades 1 through 13 are approved by the bureau, using the criteria found in 3 FAM 3124.4. Nominations for grades 14 and 15 are approved by HR/CSP;

(4) For bureaus without delegated personnel authority, QSIs are approved by HR/CSP; and

(5) There is a limit on the number of QSIs that can be approved in each bureau annually. This determination is made by the Under Secretary for Management and HR/CSP will notify bureaus accordingly.

3 FAH-1 H-2827 – H-2829 UNASSIGNED

3 FAH-1 H-2825 EXHIBIT H-2825.1 TECHNICAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)

Make sure the following checklist items are completed when conducting a technical review (see 3 FAH-1 H-2125.1).

(1) Rating is typed on Form DS-1966.

(2) Bureau time frame was met (i.e. appraisal report was not delinquent).

(3) Form typed in 10 or 12 point readable font.

(4) The Performance Plan was established in a timely manner.

(5) The written performance plan was in effect for at least 120 days.

(6) All job elements on form DS-1966 are designated critical, noncritical or additional.

- One element must be critical.
- Total of no more than five critical and noncritical job elements.
- Each critical or noncritical element is rated O, E, FS, or U.
- Total of no more than two additional elements.
- Mandatory non-critical "Security Awareness" element is included (see 3 FAM2823.4-7).
- Mandatory critical elements for supervisors, "Supervision and Office Management" and "Internal Controls" are included (see 3 FAM 2823.4-6 and 4-7).
- Mandatory critical element for employees who manage assets of monetary value, "Internal Controls" is included (see 3 FAM 2823.4-7).

(7) Additional elements were not used to determine the overall summary rating.

(8) Conversion technique was applied properly and overall summary rating is correct.

(9) The narrative addresses all critical and noncritical elements and provides examples reflective of the element level recommended.

(10) There are no inadmissible comments (see 3 FAH-1 H2825.2).

(11) Appraisal includes rating official approval signature and date in Form Section IV, Part 2.

(12) One progress review is documented, signed and dated by the rating official and the employee in Form Section V, Part 1.

(13) Employee must make an election regarding higher level review in Form

Section V, Part 2.

(14) If the employee elects a higher level review, the reviewing official completes Form Section V, Part 3.

(15) A higher level review is mandatory when the overall summary rating is "Unacceptable".

(16) Acknowledgement of the appraisal discussion is signed and dated by both the rating official and the employee in Form Section V, Part 4.

(17) The Executive Director certifies the Technical Review was completed in Form Section VI.

3 FAH-1 H-2826 EXHIBIT H-2826.1 CRITERIA FOR COMMENDATION OF RATING OFFICIALS

(TL:POH-072; 09-24-2001)

(1) Is rating well written and grammatically correct?

(2) Does narrative address each job element and cite specific examples of achievements or shortcomings?

(3) Do examples of performance reflect the individual job element rating levels and the overall summary rating levels?

(4) Is the rating candid?

(5) Is the rating objective?

(6) Were timelines met? (If rating official has been designated a delinquent rater, he or she is not eligible to be commended under the Recognition Program)